

attempting its profundity of feeling and thought. This is a pity, for in one at least of his poems he shows a promising technique and a capacity for imagery. P.F.

LA FORMATION DES LANGUES ROMANES. By Pierre Groult. Collection 'Lovanium'. (Casterman; 66fr.)

A brilliant study, in non-technical language, of the evolution of the Romance tongues. Written primarily for the reader whose mother-tongue is French, this book cannot fail to interest all those who, having some acquaintance with modern French, Spanish, or Italian, wish to trace the development of those languages from the Vulgar Latin of the Roman Empire. All the factors which go to form a language, historical, musical, and psychological, are skilfully analysed by the author, whose work can be strongly recommended to all who, while taking an intelligent interest in such matters, have neither the time nor the inclination to peruse larger philological treatises. S. A. H. WEETMAN.

SHAKESPEARE. By Ivor Brown. (Collins; 12s.6d.)

Another book on Shakespeare. Mr Brown has clearly read a great deal of recent Shakespearean literature, and in his book there is hardly a subject connected with Shakespeare that is left untouched. We find discussion of almost everything, from the Dark Lady to Sir Francis Bacon, from Shakespeare's bawdy to Shakespeare's bank account—there is everything, in fact, except first-hand scholarship or fruitful criticism.

Perhaps it may be argued that this is intended as a popular book. But for a book to be 'popular' there is no reason why it should not at the same time be serious (G. B. Harrison's *Introducing Shakespeare* is an excellent example of a book combining both qualities). Mr Brown's tone and approach, however, are essentially frivolous. We are told, for example, that by 1598 Shakespeare was 'the "Pin Up Boy" of the students and Inns of Court wits' (p. 13): in the realm of foreign politics Mr Brown asserts that 'Spain, after all, had its Fifth Column among the English Catholics' (p. 96): of a list of plays including *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* we are told that 'Shakespeare is slacking off' (p. 169): in *Timon of Athens* 'some of the speeches have the stench of a casualty clearing station in the lists of love' (p. 216) and, by contrast, *Antony and Cleopatra* is approved because 'after Troy, Denmark and the cliffs of Dover, the Near East, where Antony and his queen live their luxurious hours, has an astonishingly clean bill of health' (p. 218).

Criticism of the poetry is dealt with chiefly in a chapter called 'The Hand of Glory'. Mr Brown draws (p. 306) on Mr Polly's rather obscure critical distinction between 'Sesquippeledan Verboojuice' and 'Eloquent Rapsodooce'. In support of the assertion that 'nobody has felt more keenly than Shakespeare the value of "w"' (p. 313)

Mr Brown remarks 'Cleopatra frequently calls on her "Women, Women"'. Her creator knew that "girls" would not do at the moment of supreme stress' (p. 314), and of the line 'Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' he asks, 'Why had Marlowe never thought of it?' (p. 307). Others may abide Mr Brown's question; we are free.

P. A. BIRRELL.

BROKEN IMAGES. By John Guest. (Longmans; 10s.6d.)

This is an interesting journal of the experiences of a sensitive, literary-minded man during the late war. The author has a pleasant narrative style and considerable capacities for evoking the scenes he has witnessed. As a self-revelation, it is frank and unpretentious, and tinged with the morbidity of the *Waste Land* generation. Presumably the reason for its being sent to this journal for review lies in the description of the author's attendance at an audience given to Allied troops in the Vatican during the Italian campaign. Mr Guest is not a Catholic and his account is refreshingly direct and objective. The impression made on him by Pope Pius XII is remarkable and might, one day, prove of great importance.

P.F.

AS LITTLE CHILDREN. By Marc Bernard. (Dennis Dobson; 12s.6d.)

Novels of childhood are more wearisome than most, for the contrast between a child's world and the adult's recollection and interpretation of it is rarely managed with grace. And the heavy hand of psychological inquisitiveness has, in recent writing, made things worse. M. Bernard's book, the winner of a Prix Goncourt, is however quite exceptionally successful. It evolves, with something of a child's growing awareness of the world and his share in it, and the record of poverty and squalor in a town in the south of France is managed with a freedom from whimsy at one extreme, and from excessive crudity at the other, which reflects perhaps the sanity of a French attitude to children. A feckless mother, eccentric schoolmasters and sententious priests, crippled cobblers and remote ladies of the château—all are observed with that infallible judgment which should make even an unbeliever suspect that children have a firm hold of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, or at least have an innocent eye free from the distortions of worldly wisdom. However that may be, *As Little Children* is attractively translated by George Reavey, and gives an authentic picture of a part of French life, and of as much of a child's mind as is likely to be available to a man's understanding.

I.E.

LES NOUVELLES TENDANCES DE LA DEMOCRATIE ANGLAISE. By Paul Visscher. Collection 'Lovanium'. (Casterman; 60fr.)

It is always interesting, and sometimes instructive, to hear what foreigners have to say about ourselves; and M. de Visscher has given us a penetrating study of the British parliamentary system.